DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 451 499 CS 014 368

AUTHOR Honeyghan, Glasceta
TITLE Authentic Text: Linking Home, School, and Community with Environmental Texts.

PUB DATE 2000-12-00
NOTE 5p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Journal Articles (080)
JOURNAL CIT Florida Reading Quarterly; v37 n2 p14-16 Dec 2000
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Class Activities; *Classroom Environment; *Emergent Literacy; *Instructional Materials; Primary Education; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Materials; Reading Skills
IDENTIFIERS *Environmental Print

ABSTRACT

Authentic or popular texts--such as newspapers, grocery lists, magazines, and pamphlets--can be used effectively in reading instruction. This article first discusses the importance and usefulness of environmental print, or authentic texts, in the context of formal schooling. It then presents a list of authentic texts (several kinds of texts for each letter of the alphabet). The article concludes with a 21-item list of ways to use authentic texts to create print rich classrooms that immerse students in meaningful understanding of print. (Contains 11 references.) (RS)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 451 499

Authentic Text: Linking Home, School, and Community with Environmental Texts.

by Glasceta Honeyghan

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
K.L. LAFRAMBOISE
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CS 014 368

Authentic Text: Linking Home, School, and Community with Environmental Texts

Glasceta Honeyghan

Authentic or popular text – such as newspapers, grocery lists, magazines, -- can be used effectively in reading instruction.

Research conducted in emergent literacy over the past two decades concludes that students who are surrounded with print flourish in literacy development and are often successful in school. Examination of literacy events that occur in many homes indicate that children observe parents reading mail, books, papers, and magazines, filling out forms and writing notes and letters. These literacy behaviors are often extended to the immediate community where young children observe, read, and discuss the signs and symbols around them. This environmental print, which is described as reading printed language on signs, displays, billboards, and labels found in the context of everyday living, is defined by Harris and Hodges (1995) as authentic text.

Reading environmental print, or authentic texts, such as product labels, signs, or bumper stickers can give children an early sense of learning to read. Environmental print may be used in interesting ways to give children confidence in reading as well as to help them come to understand how print works (Reutzel & Cooter, 1996). Heibert and Ham (1981) reported that children who were taught with environmental print learned significantly more letter names and sounds when compared with children who learned alphabet letters without using environmental print. McGee, Lomax, and Head (1988) found that young children's attempts to read familiar print are highly organized and indicate attention to graphic details in some contexts. As most students learning to read have experiences with environmental print, building on these strengths should enhance literacy development. Therefore, it would seem logical to include authentic texts in the literacy curriculum.

When children begin the process of formal schooling, they are often participants in literacy experiences that consist of structured schedules of lessons and scripted dialogs extracted from chapters in textbooks and exam-based reading materials. For instance, many classroom textbooks and basals present reading in a fragmented manner using selections divorced from student's immediate life experiences and with no relevance to their immediate needs. These selections serve no useful purpose in student's everyday lives and result in little authentic learning. If professional educators incorporate authentic environmental texts into their literacy curriculum, the students will engage in reading and handling real books, resulting in authentic meaning-making experiences. Effective reading programs should expose students to a wider variety of texts, which would prepare them for the quantity and quality of information they encounter daily. Authentic, environmental texts can enrich and enhance the curriculum with information that is current, practical, relevant, and significant. Students are able to appreciate the main purpose of reading, which is to read for pleasure, information, and survival.

These texts can begin to build on the school's curriculum by creating links between the knowledge and experiences at the home community and school community, thus helping students discover the connection between print and their lives. When students become involved in reading authentic texts, they become aware of a diverse range of reading materials from various informational perspectives. They are sampling various literacy engagements, thereby extending the literacy experience and promoting multidisciplinary learning. They become aware that literacy is part of day-to-day activities and events, and that reading fulfills various purposes and functions in their lives.

One example of authentic text that bridges the home community with the school community is the newspaper. Generally, when children see parents reading the newspaper and discussing information, they begin to appreciate it as text. they realize that reading is a way to relate to the world around them and to entertain them. When the newspaper experience is extended to the classroom, similar results can be anticipated. Teachers may use the same newspaper to locate both advertisements and articles for literacy development, providing opportunities for the students to connect the learning between the home, school, and community.

The newspaper is only one of many authentic texts derived from the students' environment. My student teachers and I created the following list of authentic and environmental texts. We have recognized that some texts on our list may appear too advanced and might seem more appropriate for more mature readers. We have included various environmental texts in our selection of authentic texts because we are aware of the wide range of reading and linguistic abilities that are represented in all classrooms. Additionally, those readers who teach adult learners, including those who speak English as a second language, may benefit from some of these texts. The planning of literacy events centered on these texts would

need to consider the individual literacy needs of the student.

The ABC's of Authentic Texts

Awards, address labels, apology notes, assignments, address books, autographs, aisle markers, advertisements, accident reports, alien cards, autographs, abstracts, articles

Bills, budgets, book jackets, book reviews, book reports, bank statements, brochures, business cards, banners, birth/baptismal certificates, bulletin boards, bumper stickers, book lists, Bible, boxes (toothpaste, cereal, soap, etc.), Braille, bibliographies

Coupons, citations, catalogs, CD's, campaign flyers, certificates, crossword puzzles, card catalogs, cookbooks, checks, checklists, charts, copyrights, calendars, contracts, codes, collage writing, comic books, clocks, card games, clues, calculators, credit cards, closed caption TV programs, classroom lists (rules, directions, etc.), computers, clover-leaf signs, cartoons

Directions for models/household products, diplomas, diary entries, display boards, dictionaries, date books, daily planner/papers, door signs, driver's licenses, dashboards, database software

Experience charts, envelopes, e-mails, encyclopedias, eviction notices, emergency numbers, exams

Food labels, food stamps, flyers, fables, for-sale signs, file identifications, faxed messages, forms

Grade reports, grocery lists, greeting cards, good graffiti, graphs, guides, games, garage sale signs, globes, gazettes, graphic software, glossaries

Historical signs, horoscopes, handbooks, heath reports, handbills, headstones, how-to books

Invitations, IOU's, itineraries, inventories, internet

Journals, jokes, job applications, junk mail

Keyboards, Koran, Kaddish, kits

Labels, license plates, letters, logs (learning, travel) lists, lesson plans, litigation, logos

Menus, money, maps, medicine bottles, movie reviews, manuals, magazines, math problems, manufacturer's warning labels, memorandums, manuscripts

Nursery rhymes, notes, notebooks, newsletters, names, newspapers

Obituaries, outlines, overhead transparencies, orthographies, odometers

Poems, posters, parking meters, programs, pay stubs, prescriptions, polls, paragraphs, post-its, pamphlets, petitions, passports, postcards, plays, puzzles (paradigms, jigsaw, etc.) price lists, phone cards, periodicals

Questionnaires, quotes, quizzes

Road signs, recipes, records, riddles, reward posters, remote control, resume, raps, rhymes, receipts, reports, references

Street signs, summaries, stories, scripts, surveys, sympathy cards, schedules, scrapbooks, songs, scoreboards, scrabbles, stamps, shopping bags, slogans, sign language, sequels, spreadsheet, software, stamps

Tags, tickets, telephone directories, tax forms, T-shirts, TV guides, tracts, thermometers, things-to-do lists, tongue twisters, thank-you notes, tests, travel information

Utility bills, unit plans, uppercase letters

Valentine messages, videos, visa, vita

Warning signs/labels, wish lists, warranties, wanted posters, word search puzzles, wills, workbook, working papers, wrappers (i.e., .gum, candy), worldwide web, word -processing programs

Xylograph (engraving on wood)

Yearbooks

Zone (geographic)

Suggested Uses

How can these types of print, many of which would seem non-academic, be used effectively in the classroom? Many of these texts can be used starting in Pre-K to accomplish specific reading skills necessary for critical and analytical reading. The purpose is twofold: students can revel in the context of personal or popular reading while they practice necessary skills.

Some creative and innovative educators have been practicing sound methodology, using environmental authentic texts to create print rich classrooms that immerse students in meaningful understanding of print (Blanchard and Rottenberg, 1990; Cornett, 1999; Harp, 1988; Koeller & Mitchell, 1997; Piazza, 1999; Reutzel & Cooter, 1990; Shepherd, 1990). They use or recommend the use of these texts routinely as part of the daily curriculum. The following are drawn from such ideas:

- Teacher and students can bring in empty boxes of household items such as cereal and toothpaste and set up centers, messages, bulletin boards. These areas can be the setting for many literacy events including activities to promote phonemic awareness.
- Songs, poems, jokes, tongue twisters, riddles, and riddles can be enlarged and placed on charts. These can be useful in exercises such as substituting lyrics or to make individual collections.
- An attractive bulletin board "How many nursery rhymes do you know?" can be designed to encourage browsing through a supply of Mother Goose books.

- Make new book jackets for favorite books.
- Compile a scrapbook of brief book reviews. Let it serve as a source of information for browsers.
- As the New Year approaches, acquire a complimentary calendar for each student. Provide instruction in reading and marking the calendar for important events. More advanced learners could study the origins of the calendar.
- Various charts can be made for classroom reference, information and record keeping. Some of these might be word walls, alphabet charts, songs-we-know list, and daily events. Others might be for directions, classroom rules, and classroom routines.
- Magazines can be used to focus on elements or sections. More advanced students can produce their own class magazine or newspaper.
- Plan a field trip to the grocery store, including the creation of grocery lists with the assistance of weekly newspaper ads and coupons.
- Make a collection of professional cartoons. Display and discuss them. Help students design their own.
- Help students create a montage by cutting pictures from magazines and pasting them together to illustrate an association of ideas. Use it as a pre-writing activity for shared writing.
- Where cooking experience might spring from a piece of children's literature, make cooking part of a thematic unit. Rebus charts can be used effectively to help students learn sequential order in a natural way as they follow a recipe.
- Invite a doctor, dentist, nurse, or health expert to visit the classroom. Follow-up literacy events would build on the information gained through listening and reading from brochures provided by these health professionals.
- Arrange a collection of poems, songs, and rhymes around a certain theme. Place the collection in the classroom library.
- Students can be encouraged to create their own crosswords, word games, and puzzles.
- Students can be encouraged to bring home or community texts for silent reading and classroom sharing.
- Compile a scrapbook of favorite advertisements for the classroom library center.
- Prepare a set of easy-to-read scripts for Readers' Theatre.
- Make a collection of famous quotations. Share a quotation for the day.
- Enlarge a manufacturer's label and present to class via overhead or poster. Once the students have learned to read the message, have them locate word patterns. More advanced students could critically examine the advertisement.
- Designate a permanent area in the classroom as the daily news center where this information can be shared with class.

Perhaps the greatest strength of authentic texts lies in their ability to provide the latest tools or most current information to challenge the reader and encourage lifelong reading where students read for real reasons. The ABC's presented here are only the beginning.

References

Blanchard, J., & Rottenberg, C.J. (1990). Hypertext and hypermedia: Discovering and creating meaningful learning environments. *The Reading Teacher, 43,* 656-661.

Cornett, C. (1999). *The arts as meaning makers: Integrating literature and the arts throughout the curriculum.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Harp, B (1988). When the principal asks: "Why are your kids singing during reading time?" *The Reading Teacher, 4,* 454-457.

Harris, T.L., & Hodges, R. E. (1995). *The literacy dictionary: The vocabulary of reading and writing.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Heibert, E., & Ham, D. (1981). Young children and environmental print. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Reading Conference, Dallas, TX.

Koeller, S. & Mitchell, P (1997). From Ben's story to your story: Encouraging young writers, authentic voices and learning engagement. *Reading Teacher, 50,* 324-36.

McGee, L.M., Lomax, R.G., & Head, M. H. (1988). Young children's written language knowledge: What environmental and functional print reading reveals. *Journal of Reading Behavior, 20,* 99-118.

Piazza, C.L. (1999). *Multiple forms of literacy: Teaching literacy and the arts.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Reutzel, D. R. and Cooter, R. B. Jr. (1996*). Teaching children to read: From basals to books.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Reutzel, D.R., & Cooter, R.B., Jr. (1990). Whole language: Comparative effects on first-grade reading achievement. *Journal of Educational Research, 83,* 252-257.

Shepherd , L. (1999). Building on cultural capital: Linking home and school literacies with popular texts. In J. Hancock (Ed.), *The Explicit Teaching of Reading* (pp. 39-48), Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Glasceta Honeyghan is the Coordinator of Literacy Instruction at Florida Memorial College in Miami, FL. Dr. Honeyghan can be contacted at honeyg@fmc.edu.